Vikram’s English Academy (ICSE)

**ALCHEMIST QUESTION BANK**

1. Who was Santiago? What was his dream that he dreamt under sycamore tree? (2 marks)

Santiago was a shepherd from a simple farm family. The family wanted to become a priest. He dreamt that he was in a field with his sheep when a child appeared and began to play with the animals. But he didn’t like people doing that because the sheep are afraid to play with the animals and he doesn’t like people doing that because the sheep are afraid of strangers. But children always seem to be able to play with them frightening them. He said that he didn’t know why or how thee animals know the age of human beings. He continued with his dream that suddenly the child took him by both hands and transported him to Egyptian pyramids and the child said to him to go there and and he would find the hidden treasure.

2. How did Santiago pass his time when he went to trade with the merchant? (2 marks)

Ans. When Santiago went to trade with the merchant, he met a girl. He spent two hours talking to her and she told him that she was the merchant’s daughter. She spoke of life in the village, where each day was like the others. The shepherd told her of the Andalusian countryside and related the news from the other towns where he had stopped. The girl also asked him how did he learn, to which he said he learned in school like everybody does. As the day passed, the boy wished that the day would never end and that her father would stay busy and keep him waiting for three days.

3. What was the passion of Santiago which he shared with his father? Was he able to pursue his dream? How? (3 marks)

Ans. Santiago’s parents wanted him to become a priest but Santiago summoned up the courage to tell his father that he didn’t want to become a priest. He told his father that he wanted to travel. Yes, Santiago was able to pursue his dream. When he shared his dream with his father, his father told him that about the people who visited the village, and that when they leave, they are basically the same people they were when they arrived. His father also told him that people who come to the village have a lot of money and can hence afford to travel, amongst them the only ones who travel are shepherds. To this, Santiago said that he wanted to become a shepherd then. His father did not say anything further, but the next day he gave his son a pouch that held three ancient Spanish gold coins which he had once found in the fields. He told Santiago to buy his flock with those coins. The boy saw in his father’s gaze, a desire to be able, to travel the world, which was still alive despite his father’s having had to bury it.

4. What did Santiago realise about Tarifa? (1 mark)

Ans. Santiago looked at the sun and calculated that he would reach Tarifa before midday. As he thought that it is a possibility of having a dream come true that makes life interesting, he saw the position of the sun and hurried his pace. He has suddenly remembered that, in Tarifa, there was an old woman who interpreted dreams.

5. How did the old woman explain the meaning of dream? (2 marks)

Ans. The old woman said that dreams are the language of God. When he speaks in our language, she can interpret what he said. But if he speaks in the language of soul, only the person who has the dream can understand it.

6. Why did the old women ask for the one-tenth of the treasury?

Ans. The old woman told Santiago that she wouldn’t charge him any money but would have one-tenth of the treasury if he would find it. She told him that it was a language in the dream of the world. She could interpret it but the interpretation was very difficult which is why she felt that she deserved a part of what he found.

7. What is the purpose of the old woman in the Alchemist?

Ans. The old woman plays an important role in the Alchemist. She interprets Santiago’s dreams and tells him to go to the Pyramids in Egypt to find the treasure. She gives a little push to him to believe in his dreams however, Santiago was disappointed because the old woman did not give him way to go to the pyramids. This signifies that one has to carve his own route to the desired place.

8. What is the purpose of the old man in the Alchemist?

Ans. The old man appears as a biblical figure. The old man makes him believe that he knew the information which Santiago had not even shared with anyone. He tells Santiago about the mysterious force and by giving the example of the miner, convinces Santiago to not give up .

9. Was Santiago satisfied with the interpretation of his dream given by the old woman? Reason why?

Ans. No, Santiago was not satisfied with the interpretation of his dreams given by the old woman, he was rather disappointed. He thought that he had wasted his time as she had not told him anything different. When he asked the old woman that how would he get to go to Egypt, she said that she could only interpret dreams and did not know to turn them into reality. Santiago then remembered that he also had other things to take care of.

10. What is the mysterious force explained by the old man to Santiago?

Ans. Santiago wanted to know what the mysterious force was. The old man told him that it is a force that appears to be negative but actually shows you how to realize your destiny. It prepares the spirit and the will, because there is one great truth on the planet. The old man says that no matter whoever he was or what he did, when someone really wants something, it is because that desire is originated in the soul of the universe. It is your mission on earth.

11. Explain the example of a miner given by the old man? Cite the reason why did he do so?

Ans. The old man gave an example of a miner who had abandoned everything to go mining for emeralds. The miner had been working a certain river for five years and had examined over thousands of stones looking for an emerald. Just when he was about to give up, the old man transformed himself into a stone that rolled up to the miner’s foot. The miner, with all the anger and frustration, threw it with such a force that it broke the stone and there was the most beautiful emerald in the world. The old man gave this example to Santiago, because he thought that Santiago had come too far to give up now.